

1     What is claimed is:

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3     1.     A call routing system for use in directory assistance, said routing system  
4     comprising:

5             a primary call routing device configured to receive directory assistance  
6     calls from callers at a first directory assistance system, and to determine, for each  
7     of said calls, whether said calls will be handled by said first directory assistance  
8     system, or by a second directory assistance system among a plurality of directory  
9     assistance systems; and

10            a secondary router, said secondary router configured to route said calls  
11     within said first directory assistance system to said primary call routing device,  
12     said secondary router having a default call distribution logic, wherein if said  
13     primary call routing device is off-line, said secondary call router routes said calls  
14     among said first directory assistance system and said plurality of directory  
15     assistance systems according to said default distribution logic.

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17     2.     The call routing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said secondary  
18     router further maintains a means for determine the online/off-line status of said  
19     primary call routing device.

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21     3.     The call routing system as claimed in claim 1, wherein said directory  
22     assistance system further comprises a means for determining the on line/off-line  
23     status of said primary call routing device, and delivering information on said  
24     status to said secondary router.

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2       4.       The call routing system as claimed in claim 1, further comprising a  
3       transfer router, said transfer router configured to transfer calls between said  
4       directory assistance system and a second directory assistance system via a Wide  
5       Area Network (WAN).

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7       5.       The call routing system as claimed in claim 4, wherein said primary call  
8       routing device routes a portion of said plurality of said incoming calls to said  
9       second directory assistance system when said directory assistance system is  
10      experiencing high call volume.

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12      6.       The call routing system as claimed in claim 4, wherein said secondary  
13      router routes a portion of said plurality of said incoming calls to said second  
14      directory assistance system when said primary call routing device is off line.

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16      7.       The call routing system as claimed in claim 4, further comprising an  
17      automatic call distribution call center, configured to receive a portion of said  
18      plurality of calls from said secondary router and distribute them among a  
19      plurality of operator terminals disposed within said directory assistance system.

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21      8.       The call routing system as claimed in claim 7, where in said second  
22      directory assistance system further comprises a second automatic call  
23      distribution call center configured to receive a portion of said plurality of calls

1 from said secondary router and distribute them among a plurality of operator  
2 terminals disposed within said second directory assistance system.

3  
4 9. A call routing system for use in a directory assistance system, said  
5 routing system comprising:

6 a primary call routing device configured to receive directory assistance  
7 calls from callers;

8 a frequent caller database, configured to store information corresponding  
9 to frequent callers; and

10 a frequent caller routing module, configured to determine if a particular  
11 caller's information is stored in said frequent caller database and to determine if  
12 said caller is to receive priority call routing.

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14 10. The call routing system as claimed in claim 9, wherein said frequent call  
15 routing module is located within said primary call routing device.

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17 11. The call routing system as claimed in claim 9, wherein said frequent call  
18 routing module is a software application within said primary call routing device.

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20 12. The call routing system as claimed in claim 9, wherein said frequent call  
21 routing module is configured to convey the priority call routing decision to said  
22 primary call routing device to perform routing of said call.

23

1       13.     The call routing system as claimed in claim 9, wherein said information  
2       corresponding to frequent callers includes a listing of frequent callers to said  
3       directory assistance system and the corresponding frequency of their calls.

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5       14.     The call routing system as claimed in claim 13, wherein said frequency  
6       of calls made to said directory assistance system are stored as calls per month.

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8       15.     The call routing system as claimed in claim 9, wherein said information  
9       corresponding to frequent callers includes a listing of frequent callers to said  
10      directory assistance system are stored in one of a plurality of designated call  
11      frequency groups.

12  
13      16.     The call routing system as claimed in claim 15, wherein said frequent  
14      caller routing module makes priority routing decisions for incoming calls based  
15      on said call frequency group assigned to said caller, in said frequent caller  
16      database.

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18      17.     The call routing system as claimed in claim 16, wherein said frequent  
19      caller routing module attempts to designate a desired predefined percentage of  
20      calls of the total numbers of calls to said directory assistance system as priority  
21      calls.

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1 18. The call routing system as claimed in claim 17, wherein said desired  
2 percentage of calls is 3-5% of the total call volume to said directory assistance  
3 system.

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5 19. The call routing system as claimed in claim 17, wherein said frequent  
6 caller routing module dynamically adjusts priority routing decisions for  
7 incoming calls by changing said call frequency groups that are designated for  
8 priority routing so as to maintain said predefined percentage of calls of the total  
9 numbers of calls to said directory assistance system, routed as priority calls.

10  
11 20. The call routing system as claimed in claim 9, wherein said priority call  
12 routing includes expediting the handling of said call within said directory  
13 assistance system.

14  
15 21. The call routing system as claimed in claim 9, wherein said priority call  
16 routing includes routing said call within said directory assistance system to a  
17 particular operator terminal among a plurality of operator terminals.

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19 22. The call routing system as claimed in claim 21, wherein said particular  
20 operator terminal is an increased skill operator.

21  
22 23. A call routing system for use in directory assistance, said routing system  
23 comprising:

1           a primary call routing device configured to receive directory assistance  
2       calls from callers at a first directory assistance system, and to determine, for each  
3       of said calls, whether said calls will be handled by said first directory assistance  
4       system, or by a second directory assistance system among a plurality of directory  
5       assistance systems;

6           a frequent caller database, configured to store information corresponding  
7       to frequent callers;

8           a frequent caller routing module, configured to determine if a particular  
9       caller's information is stored in said frequent caller database and to determine if  
10      said caller is to receive priority call routing, and

11          a secondary router, said secondary router configured to route said calls  
12      within said first directory assistance system to said primary call routing device,  
13      said secondary router having a default call distribution logic, wherein if said  
14      primary call routing device is off-line, said secondary call router routes said calls  
15      among said first directory assistance system and said plurality of directory  
16      assistance systems according to said default distribution logic.

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18       24.    A method for routing directory assistance calls, said method comprising  
19       the steps of:

20           receiving directory assistance calls from callers at a primary call routing  
21       device of a first directory assistance system;

22           determining, for each of said calls, whether said calls will be handled by  
23       said first directory assistance system or by a second directory assistance system  
24       among a plurality of directory assistance systems;

1 routing said calls in said first directory assistance system from a  
2 secondary router to said primary call routing device for primary call routing; and  
3 if said primary call routing device is off-line, routing said calls among  
4 said first directory assistance system and said plurality of directory assistance  
5 systems by a default logic contained in said secondary router.

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7 25. The method as claimed in claim 24, further comprising the step of  
8 determining if said primary call routing device is on-line or off-line.

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10 26. The method as claimed in claim 25, further comprising the step of  
11 notifying said secondary router of said on-line/off-line status of said primary call  
12 routing device.

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14 27. The method as claimed in claim 24, further comprising the step of  
15 transferring calls between said first directory assistance system and said second  
16 directory assistance system by way of a Wide Area Network (WAN).

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18 28. The method as claimed in claim 24, further comprising the step of  
19 transferring calls between said first directory assistance system and said second  
20 directory assistance system by way of the Internet.

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22 29. The method as claimed in claim 24, further comprising the step of  
23 transferring calls between said first directory assistance system and said second  
24 directory assistance system by way of a packet switched network.

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2 30. The method as claimed in claim 24, further comprising the step of  
3 transferring calls between said first directory assistance system and said second  
4 directory assistance system when said first directory assistance system is  
5 experiencing high call volume.  
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7 31. A method for routing calls within a directory assistance system, said  
8 method comprising the steps of:  
9 receiving a directory assistance call at a primary call routing device;  
10 storing information corresponding to frequent callers in a frequent caller  
11 database;  
12 determining if a particular caller's information is stored in said frequent  
13 caller database; and  
14 determining, at a frequent caller routing module, based on said caller's  
15 information, if said caller is to receive priority call routing.  
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17 32. A method as claimed in claim 31, further comprising the step of storing  
18 information corresponding to frequent callers including listing frequent callers to  
19 said directory assistance system and the corresponding frequency of their calls.  
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21 33. A method as claimed in claim 32 wherein said information corresponding  
22 to frequent callers includes a listing of frequent callers to said directory  
23 assistance system in a plurality of designated call frequency groups.  
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1     34.     A method as claimed in claim 33, wherein said frequent caller routing  
2     module executes priority call routing decisions based on said designated call  
3     frequency groups.

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5     35.     A method as claimed in claim 33, wherein said frequent caller routing  
6     module designates a desired percentage of calls, of the total number of calls to  
7     said directory assistance system, to be handled as priority calls.

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9     36.     A method as claimed in claim 35, further comprising the step of  
10    dynamically adjusting priority routing decisions for incoming calls by changing  
11    said call frequency groups that are designated for priority routing so as to  
12    maintain said predefined percentage of calls of the total numbers of calls to said  
13    directory assistance system, routed as priority calls.

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15    37.     A method as claimed in claim 31, further comprising the step of  
16    expediting the handling of a call after a priority routing has been assigned to that  
17    call.

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19    38.     A method as claimed in claim 31, further comprising the step of routing a  
20    call to a particular operator terminal among a plurality of operator terminals after  
21    a priority routing has been assigned to that call.